

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-17

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00

USIE-00 PM-07 H-02 INR-10 L-03 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01

PRS-01 SS-15 IO-13 INRE-00 RSR-01 /084 W

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O 100549 Z JUN 73

FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 7677

C O N F I D E N T I A L PANAMA 3058

E O 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, OAS, CU, VE, PN

SUBJ: VENEZUELA MOVES TO ALTER OAS CUBA POLICY

REF: STATE 111558

SUMMARY: PANAMA WILL VOTE IN SUPPORT OF OAS RESOLUTION TO LEAVE EACH COUNTRY FREE TO MAKE OWN DECISION ON APPLICATION OF SANCTIONS TO CUBA BUT PANAMA HAS NOT MADE ANY DECISION TO ESTABLISH DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH CUBA AND IS NOT NOW CONSIDERING. END SUMMARY.

1. FON MIN TACK AGREED TO SEE ME AT HIS HOME SATURDAY EVENING JUNE 9. I DESCRIBED VENEZUELAN INITIATIVE, RESTATED OUR UNCHANGED POSITION ON SANCTIONS POLICY AND URGED TACK INSTRUCT OAS DELEGATION TO VOTE IN SUPPORT OF CONTINUANCE IN FORCE OF OAS RESOLUTIONS REGARDING CUBA.

2. TACK EXPRESSED SURPRISE AT NOTION VENEZUELA SEEKING SPECIAL MEETING OF OAS PERMANENT COUNCIL AS EARLY AS MONDAY JUNE 11. HE HAD HEARD NOTHING FROM VENEZUELAN DESPITE FACT HE CONFIDENT THEY WOULD LOBBY IN SUPPORT OF SUCH INITIATIVE. MOREOVER BOTH PANAMANIAN AMBASSADOR IN CARACAS AND OAS DELEGATE PITY ARE HERE AND NEITHER HAS MENTIONED VENEZUELAN MOVE. AT SAME TIME, TACK ACKNOWLEDGED HIS OWN CERTAINTY THAT VENEZUELA MOVING TO NORMALIZE RELATIONS WITH CUBA SINCE
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COPEI BELIEVES THIS WILL WIN LEFTIST VOTES AND IS INEVITABLE
RESULT DOMESTIC POLITICAL PRESSURE.

FONMIN SAID HE HAD TO TELL ME " IN ALL CANDOR" THAT CLEARLY
ESTABLISHED GOP POLICY THIS SUBJECT IS THAT EACH COUNTRY SHOULD
BE FREE TO MAKE ITS OWN DECISION ON RELATIONS WITH CUBA. HE
SAID THIS POSITION DERIVED BASICALLY FROM FACT MEXICO HAD NEVER
ADHERED TO OAS CUBA SANCTIONS POLICY RATHER THAN FROM MORE
RECENT UNILATERAL ACTIONS BY COUNTRIES SUCH AS PERU AND CHILE.
SMALLER COUNTRIES ARE ENTITLED TO ENJOY SAME FREEDOM OF ACTION
AS MEXICO.

4. I REMINDED TACK THAT WE CONSIDER " OPTIONAL" SANCTIONS
CONCEPT NOT ONLY POLITICALLY UNWISE BUT JURIDICALLY UNSOUND
SINCE IT OUR VIEW THAT PERMANENT COUNCIL LIMITED TO ACTION
WITHIN THE NINTH MFM MANDATE, I. E., TO LIFTING SANCTIONS
BY TWO- THIRDS VOTE AFTER MAKING FINDING THAT CUBA NO LONGER
A THREAT TO PEACE AND SECURITY OF HEMISPHERE. MOREOVER
PERMANENT COUNCIL CANNOT MODIFY RESOLUTION OF NINTH MFM
ACTING AS ORGAN OF CONSULTATION UNDER RIO TREATY SINCE ONLY
ORGAN OF CONSULTATION ITSELF CAN DO THIS. TACK SAID IT NOT
HIS IMPRESSION THAT COUNCIL WOULD HAVE TO PROCEED IN THIS
MATTER BY TWO- THIRDS VOTE NOT BY SIMPLE MAJORITY AND IT WOULD
REMAIN TO BE SEEN WHETHER VENEZUELA HAD ENOUGH VOTES. AT
SAME TIME, TACK SAID, PANAMA BELIEVES OAS REQUIRES RADICAL
CHANGE. I SAID I UNDERSTOOD PANAMA AMONG COUNTRIES
BELIEVING OAS REQUIRES REFORMS TO IMPROVE ITS CAPACITY TO
DEAL WITH THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF TODAY. ON OTHER HAND, I
SUPPOSED PANAMA BELIEVED WAY TO DO THIS WAS NOT BY
FLOUTING JURIDICAL ORDER ESTABLISHED BY OAS PRECEDENTS BUT
BY ORDERLY REFORM PROCESS IN WHICH WE NOW ENGAGED AS
COMMUNITY ENTERPRISE, I. E., BY MODERNIZING WHILE
PRESERVING INTEGRITY OF INSTITUTION HEMISPHERE NATIONS HAVE
BUILT TOGETHER. TACK AGREED HASTILY NOTING PANAMA'S INTENTION
PARTICIPATE ACTIVELY IN LIMA MEETINGS OF OAS SPECIAL
COMMITTEE.

5. TACK INSISTED THAT DESPITE JURIDICAL CONSIDERATIONS,
HEMISPHERE IS FACED WITH DE FACTO SITUATION OF ESTABLISHED
CUBAN REGIME NOT ABOUT TO BE OVERTHROWN AND OF FAILURE OF
HEMISPHERE TO ADHERE TO SANCTIONS POLICY INASMUCH AS EIGHT
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COUNTRIES NOW HAVE RELATIONS WITH CUBA. HEMISPHERE MUST
COME TO TERMS WITH THIS REALITY. IN DEVELOPING MORE
REALISTIC APPROACH, HEMISPHERE COUNTRIES MIGHT PLAY POSITIVE
ROLE IN LESSENING CUBA'S PRESENT UTTER DEPENDENCE ON SOVIET
UNION WITH CORRESPONDING INTERNAL EVOLUTION IN CUBA. I
REMARKED THAT OUR SUPPORT FOR OAS SANCTIONS NOT DESIGNED
OVERTHROW CUBAN REGIME BUT TO CONVINCE IT TO ESCHEW

INTERVENTION IN INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF OTHERS AND SUPPORT FOR REVOLUTION. ALSO NOTED THAT DEFECTIONS FROM SANCTIONS POLICY NOT AS GREAT AS NUMBERS SUGGEST SINCE HALF OF THOSE NOW HAVING RELATIONS WITH CUBA WERE NOT EVEN MEMBERS OAS AT TIME OF NINTH MFM. TACK CONCURRED.

6. FONMIN SAID HE COULD UNDERSTAND U. S. POSITION BUT GOP POSITION ADOPTED ONLY AFTER FULLEST DISCUSSION AT TOP LEVEL GOVERNMENT AT TIME OF PERUVIAN PROPOSAL LAST YEAR. RECOGNIZING GOP POSITION AS HE HAD STATED IT, I ASKED TACK WHETHER GOP COULD ABSTAIN IF THIS MATTER COMES TO A VOTE. HE SAID IT COULD NOT. DECISION HAD BEEN MADE IN FULL CABINET MEETING LAST YEAR THAT PANAMA SHOULD SUPPORT POSITION THAT EACH COUNTRY SHOULD BE FREE TO MAKE ITS OWN DECISION ON RELATIONS WITH CUBA AND PANAMA WOULD HAVE TO VOTE THAT WAY NOW. HOWEVER, TACK EMPHASIZED PANAMA HAS NOT MADE ANY DECISION TO ESTABLISH DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH CUBA AND DOES NOT HAVE THE MATTER UNDER CONSIDERATION.

7. COMMENT: TACK IS BEING CONSIDERABLY MORE FORTHRIGHT ABOUT THE GOP POSITION NOW THAN HE WAS AT THE TIME OF THE PERUVIAN INITIATIVE LAST SUMMER. NEVERTHELESS, GOP BEHAVIOR AT THAT TIME AND SINCE ON THIS SUBJECT SUGGESTS THAT IN FACT A FIRM, TOP- LEVEL DECISION WAS MADE THEN AS TACK NOW SAYS IT WAS. THE POSITION TACK DESCRIBES IS ENTIRELY CONSISTENT WITH THE SCORNFUL LINE ON CUBA SANCTIONS TAKEN BY TORRIJOS AT THE UNSC MEETING HERE AND WITH PANAMA'S CAREFUL BUT STEADY MOVEMENT IN THE DIRECTION OF NORMALIZING RELATIONS WITH CUBA. MY TALK WITH TACK ONLY CONFIRMED MY ASSUMPTION THAT THE GOP IS FIRMLY ON THE OPPOSITE SIDE OF THE FENCE FROM US ON THIS ONE. THE ONLY POSITIVE GAIN I CAN SEE FROM OUR DEMARCHE IS THAT I THINK I SHOOK TACK ON THE JURIDICAL ASPECT AND WE SHOULD BE ABLE TO MAKE GOOD PROCEDURAL USE OF HIS WILLINGNESS TO ADMIT THAT TWO- THIRDS VOTE RATHER THAN SIMPLE
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MAJORITY REQUIRED ON THIS ISSUE.
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